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# *The Kikuyu Mission*

(British East Africa).

By the Rev. Dr HENRY E. SCOTT.



*A Kikuyu Warrior.*

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# THE KIKUYU MISSION

## (BRITISH EAST AFRICA).



IT seems to be inevitable that the founding of a Mission in a heathen country should be associated with vicissitude and hardship. When we look back to the early days of the Kikuyu Mission we find it has an eventful and very sad story to tell of its early struggles.

The story of the Kikuyu Mission may be divided into two stages. I. It was founded at Kibwezi twenty years ago (1891) in the midst of the WaKamba people, about two hundred miles from the east coast of Africa. II. Eight years later it was transferred to the Kikuyu country, three hundred miles from the coast, and an entirely new start of Mission work was made.

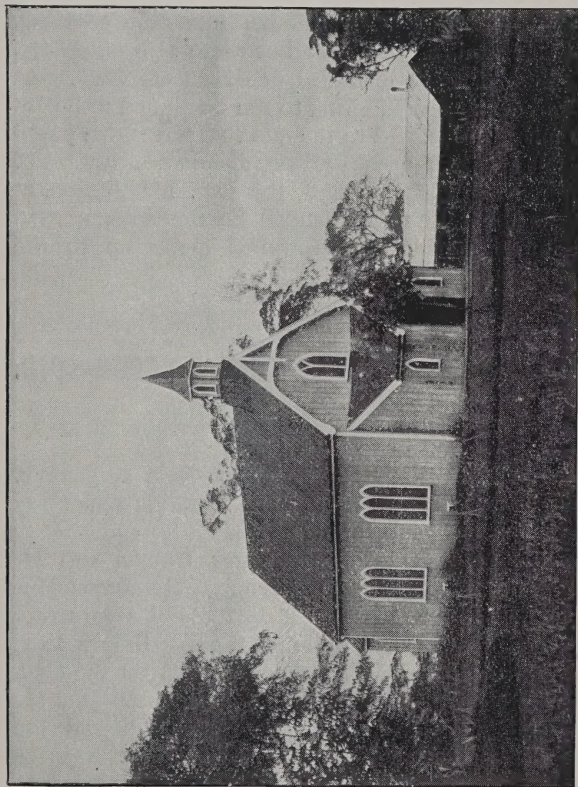
Let me tell something of these two periods.

## I. The Eight Years at Kibwezi—1891-98.

British East Africa was originally administered by the Imperial British East Africa Chartered Company. It does not frequently happen that the administrators of a colony actually found a Mission, but in this case Sir Wm. Mackinnon, Mr A. L. Bruce, and other directors of the Company took the matter up, and with the help of a number of friends who subscribed liberally to the work, founded the East Africa Scottish Mission. Dr Stewart of Lovedale was invited to act as pioneer and to establish a Mission on industrial lines.

In 1891 Dr Stewart and five other missionaries reached Mombasa, and after travelling two hundred miles inland, they chose Kibwezi as the site of the future Mission. The necessary land was purchased on 7th December from the chief Kilundu, the price being 160 yards of calico, some brass wire, and a present equal to the value of the calico and wire. Dr Stewart had intended going right on to the Kikuyu country, but so unsettled was the Kikuyu tribe at that time that the missionaries were not allowed to go to settle amongst them.

From the very first Kibwezi proved to be an unfortunate spot for the Mission. The health of the missionaries suffered severely, and through death or invaliding



*The Church at Kikuyu.*



home of the members, the staff was constantly being reduced to its lowest. Reinforcements were sent out from home again and again; but these also either left the Mission or were invalided or died from fever. At last it was decided that, owing to the continued ill-health of the missionaries, and to the fact that the native population was scanty, the Kibwezi site should be abandoned. Accordingly, in August 1898, the Rev. Mr Watson, at that time the sole representative on the field, quitted the Kibwezi station and travelled alone up to the Kikuyu country.

## **II. The Twelve Years at Kikuyu—1898-1910.**

### **1. The Removal to Kikuyu—1898.**

And now an entirely new start was made at Kikuyu. The process of clearing ground and building temporary houses was again gone through. Of all the old staff of missionaries only two remained—Mr Watson and Mr Paterson, now returned from furlough. Reinforcements from home brought new life, a doctor and a carpenter being added to the staff, while for the first time a lady, who was married to Mr Watson, appeared on the field. But the prospects, however bright at the outset, were soon overclouded. A year had barely passed ere famine visited the country. Then, as so often happens

in eastern countries, smallpox followed close on its heels. The whole staff engaged itself in relieving the sufferings of the natives, feeding those in the famine camp, finding work for those who could work, tending the sick and dying, and burying the dead. Again the staff became reduced in numbers through members leaving the Mission; but the saddest blow of all was the death of Mr Watson through pneumonia, leaving Mrs Watson a widow after one short year of married life. For the next ten months Mrs Watson lived on the station and carried on the Mission work single-handed.

Thus for the second time was the East Africa Scottish Mission reduced to its lowest ebb.

## **2. The Transference to the Church of Scotland— 1901-1907.**

In the meantime changes had occurred at home. Sir Wm. Mackinnon, the Chairman, and Mr A. L. Bruce, the prime promoters of the Mission, had died. A memorial fund, amounting to £38,000, was raised amongst their friends, and this was devoted to the permanent endowment of the Kikuyu Mission. But the Directors and Committee of the Mission were by this time realising the difficulties that, from many causes, hindered a body of laymen in conducting such work, and after sundry negotiations they decided to hand

over the practical working of the Mission to the Church of Scotland, retaining meanwhile, for reasons connected with the terms of their Constitution, the financial arrangements and control. This was in 1901. Ultimately, in 1907, the Mission was entirely handed over to the Church of Scotland, together with its endowments, consisting of the above-mentioned Memorial Fund of £38,000, the Mission land at Kikuyu, and a large estate extending to 100 square miles at Kibwezi.

The first act of the Church of Scotland, when in 1901 they assumed the working of the Mission, was to send out the Rev. Dr D. C. Ruffelle Scott to be Head of the Mission. Dr Scott brought with him the vast experience he had gained while building up the Blantyre Mission. During the six years he spent at Kikuyu his personal influence enabled him to win the confidence of headmen and villagers alike. In 1902 Dr Scott's wife died, and shortly afterwards, in 1907, he himself was suddenly cut off.

In the end of 1907 the Rev. Dr Henry E. Scott was appointed to take charge of the Mission at Kikuyu. At the same time the Church of Scotland found itself in a position to considerably increase the Mission staff and to encourage the general development of the Mission work. With a strengthened staff and a definite forward policy, the Mission has gradually grown to be what it is to-day.

The Mission is under the charge of the Foreign



Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, acting, as regards details, through its Kikuyu Sub-Committee, of whom nine are appointed by the Committee and nine by the subscribers.



*A Village School.*

Mrs Watson in centre. Chief Kioi in back row.

### 3. Kikuyu Mission of To-day—1910.

About midway between the coast of Africa and Uganda, and close to the Uganda Railway where it climbs the Highlands of Kikuyu, 6700 feet above the sea-level, stands Kikuyu Mission. It possesses one of the most beautiful sites in British East Africa. The surroundings are well wooded, while northwards one's eye sweeps right across the whole of the undulating country occupied by the Kikuyu people, till it rests on the snow-capped summits of Mount Kenia, ninety miles away, near which our Out-Station has recently been opened. Kikuyu Mission, then, stands on the southern edge of the Kikuyu country, while Tumutumumu (or Kenia) station has been placed on the northern edge, and between these two points there live, it is computed, about one million of Kikuyu people.

#### THE KIKUYU PEOPLE.

Unlike the Masai tribe, our next-door neighbours, who possess no gardens, but live on the cattle which they herd, the Kikuyu are mostly an agricultural people who live on the produce of their gardens—namely, maize, millet, beans, and potatoes. Many can afford to possess also goats and sheep, while the few possess



*Three Kikuyu Girls of the Mission.*

herds of cattle. The day's work of the Kikuyu consists largely of looking after those gardens and herds. The gardens are for the most part hoed by the women, while the herds are usually tended by the boys. What, then, do the younger and the older men engage themselves with?

To answer that, let me say that the Kikuyu are divided into very distinct classes. First, you have *the little boys* up to the age of about fifteen, whose sole occupation is looking after the herds. They take them away in the morning and bring them back to the village in the evening, their last task being the dividing up of the flock and putting the several lots into their respective huts.

Great importance is attached to the rite of circumcision, after which a boy is admitted into *the warrior class*. The young warriors' sole occupation nowadays is to bedeck themselves with paint and feathers, and to roam about the country brandishing their spears and otherwise advertising their self-importance. Immoral dances are indulged in at night, and if ever it was true that Satan finds mischief for idle hands to do, it is so in the case of these young Kikuyu warriors.

Later on, the warrior buys a wife, and passes thereby into the third class—that of *married men*. He may pay for his wife as many as sixty sheep, valued at about £16. He now builds a house for himself, having hitherto slept in the common village hut for young

men, while his wife opens up a garden. Thenceforth he settles down to an empty useless life, of which beer-drinking and gossiping amongst his neighbours form the principal elements. It is the wife who has to bear the burden of life, and she is kept hard at work from morning till night. She cultivates the crops, cuts the firewood, cooks the food, draws the water, and brings home the daily supply of potato leaves to feed the sheep in her hut overnight.

And, lastly, there are the *headmen*, who are just what you would expect them to be as the result of such lives. While there are many exceptions, in general they become sordid and unattractive, what they may eat and what they may drink being ever uppermost in their minds.

Compared with some other African tribes, the Kikuyu are not remarkably superstitious. They pray to a god, but they have very indefinite notions as to what they think of their god. They offer sacrifices. They practise witchcraft. They have a horrible practice of putting those who are about to die into the bush to be devoured by hyenas. Immoral customs and immoral talk poison the minds of the young.

It is into such a community that we have been sent with the Gospel of Christ. While we recognise the power of the Gospel to turn the hearts of the people to God, we also believe that to enable the people to free themselves from the hold of past custom and to rise above their present environment, we must give



them more than mere book learning. It is the whole man we must aim at elevating. It is a new and higher life they must be trained for, and, therefore, the means must be varied. Hence it is that Missions which combine educational, medical, and industrial methods along with the evangelistic, are generally found to give the most permanent and valuable results in the lives and the characters of the converts.

#### THE MISSION STATION.

In the centre of the station stands the church—a neat building erected almost wholly by the natives, and consisting of iron, lined with cedar-wood grown on our estate. The stained-glass memorial window records the names of the Rev. Mr Watson and the Rev. Dr Ruffelle Scott, the pioneers of the Mission at Kikuyu. Grouped around this central building stand the dwelling-houses of the missionaries. Two hundred yards from the church there stands a large stone building, the Training Institution, a welcome gift from an anonymous donor. Beyond the Institution is the temporary workshop where carpenters are in training. The surrounding fields of maize, millet, potatoes, and beans give experience to the natives in ploughing and harrowing and in other agricultural work. A little way off in the valley of the Nyongara stream stands the Hunter Memorial Hospital, and still farther down the

stream is to be seen the power-house whence a good supply of water is pumped to the various parts of the Mission by means of a Pelton wheel. The lie of the



*Apprentices at Kikuyu—seven joiners, five teachers, and one Hospital assistant.*

ground on which the station is situated lends itself to being prettily laid out.

A belt of forest close by contains the huts of the people who live on the estate, while beyond this is a stretch of open country contiguous to the great Kikuyu native reserve. The two conditions upon which natives are allowed to live on Mission land is that they work for two months in the year, for which they are paid, and that they send their children to school.

#### THE MISSION WORK.

After many years of waiting we at last see the native church coming into existence. The first convert was Karanja, whom Dr Ruffelle Scott baptised while he was on his deathbed. In 1908 six of our teachers were baptised, and now in 1910 other six young men have come forward for baptism. Under the two years' course of instruction for baptism there are as many as twenty-seven young men and women who have decided to give up their heathen lives and to try to follow Christ.

The school work is carried on by means of a *station school* for our boarders and the children living on the estate, while *village schools* are conducted for the children living at a distance. Fathers who have sheep to be herded naturally look upon our school work as

an evil, inasmuch as it draws away their children; but in spite of opposition the number of scholars attending all our schools has gradually grown, and everything points to a steady continuance of that growth. The desire for learning is most evidently on the increase.

An interesting experiment has been made in connection with school work at Limoru, twelve miles from Kikuyu. Here Mr A. G. A. Leakey, the manager of Mr T. F. V. Buxton's estates, carries on a school which he kindly allows us to supervise. He has about eighteen lads who spend certain hours at school, and the rest of their time they are trained to do farming. They all pay fees for their education. This is to our mind an ideal arrangement, where education and manual training are happily combined.

The usefulness of carpentry work as an agency in our educational training is becoming more and more evident. In addition to the villagers who are doing carpentry work, we have under systematic instruction a number of apprentices who are indentured by Government. Our senior teachers also pass through a course of carpentry work.

In the same way we look forward to apprenticing pupils to be trained in printing, mason work, agricultural and garden work.

## THE BOYS' BRIGADE.

Out of school and work hours the boarders, who number at present between forty and fifty, are mustered



*Three Privates in 1st Kikuyu Boys' Brigade.*

under Dr Arthur on certain days of the week for physical drill and football. This training has con-



tributed greatly to the discipline and general morale of the Mission life. But what seems to promise to be of most benefit to the general training of the boarders is the Boys' Brigade movement. Thirty-five of the senior boys have thus far been enrolled to form the 1st Kikuyu Company, while a similar beginning has been made at Kenia under Mr Barlow, and at Limoru under Mr A. G. A. Leahey. We believe that the disciplinary training to be derived from the Boys' Brigade will contribute in no small way to the strengthening of character amongst the pupils, many of whom will one day, we trust, be native evangelists.

Much interest has been taken in this movement by the Directors of the Boys' Brigade at home, while already twenty-three companies in different parts of Scotland have signified their intention to contribute to the support of the 1st Kikuyu Company.

#### EVANGELISTIC WORK.

As far as we know, the method adopted in our evangelistic work is peculiar to Kikuyu Mission. It was found that the best gatherings of the people for evangelistic meetings could be obtained in the evenings after dark, when the villagers had returned home. Accordingly, on Sunday and Thursday evenings the members of the staff, along with the boarders, are divided into eight parties, and with lanterns and bugles

in their hands, they go off to appointed villages within a radius of, say, three miles. A fire is kindled in the centre of the village, and around this gather the villagers, to join in the hymns and to hear the old, old story. In many districts the natives look upon the missionaries as inimical to their customs, and naturally do not welcome them. But the opposition is gradually being lived down, and the public mind is being leavened with the truths of Christianity. The fruit will appear later.

#### THE HUNTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

This hospital was opened in 1908, the gift of Mrs R. J. Hunter in memory of her husband. It consists of two wards and an operating-room, and is well equipped with instruments and medical appliances. The staff consists of a doctor, a nurse, and three native assistants. During the past two years much valuable work has been done, both in relieving suffering in the district and in counteracting by rational methods in the treatment of disease that superstition which so captivates the native mind.

#### KENIA.

Our Kenia station is situated at Tumutumu on the northern border of Kikuyu land, just under the snow-



*Hunter Memorial Hospital.*

capped peaks of Mt. Kenia and eighty miles from Kikuyu Mission. Up till 1908 missionaries were not allowed to cross the Tana river into this district because of the unsettled condition of the country. Then, however, Dr and Mrs Scott and Dr Arthur obtained permission and crossed over into the Trans-Tana district. Here they found a huge population which was practically untouched by outside influences. The Church of Scotland at once applied for a site at Tumutumu. In answer to a special appeal a large sum of money was contributed by friends at home. Mr Barlow was then appointed as our first missionary at Kenia, and in the following year Dr Horace Philp joined him. The density of the population, and the comparative readiness of the people to hear what the missionaries have to say, make this field a most promising one. Already there is growing up under these two men a work which we believe will some day exert a great influence on the lives of the people.

#### UNITED NATIVE CHURCH.

British East Africa is a land of many Missions. The oldest Mission is that of the Church Missionary Society; but we find, in addition to our own, American Baptists, American Quakers, United Methodists, German Lutherans, a Swedish Mission, and the Seventh Day Adventists. It would seem to be beyond practical



*Kenia Peaks. (Height, 17,040 feet.)*



politics to endeavour to bring about a union of all the branches of Christ's Church which will arise from the efforts of those societies ; but what is being seriously aimed at is a federation of these societies for the purpose of adopting common lines along which the young native churches may be developed in order that some day in the future they will find it more easy to draw together. If real progress can be made in this direction it surely will be to the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom.

#### NAIROBI.

Nairobi is the capital of the British East Africa Colony, and is about twelve miles from Kikuyu. A large number of Scotsmen are to be found there, and, naturally, until there is a Scots minister resident, the responsibility of providing religious ordinances falls upon us. At the request of the Colonial Committee, Dr Scott has visited Nairobi weekly, with the result that there now exists a growing congregation of Scottish Presbyterians. A church, to be called St Andrew's, is in process of erection, the foundation-stone having been laid by his Excellency the Governor on 13th June 1910.

The co-operation with our fellow-countrymen in Nairobi in this way has been a source of great satisfaction to us. There is every prospect of this congregation becoming a strong centre of Presbyterian worship.

Another direction in which the Kikuyu Mission has

interested itself amongst our fellow-countrymen has been in helping to start a Y.M.C.A. in Nairobi. Ex-President Roosevelt gave the first subscription towards this, and it was followed by one of £1000 from Mr M'Millan for the purpose of erecting the building. We hope soon to see the Y.M.C.A. a flourishing institution in Nairobi, and we wish it may be a power in the lives of the young men of the colony.

Such is the position of the Kikuyu Mission to-day. It is one which contains great promise for the future. While there are many different Missions in the colony engaged in evangelistic work, there is no one filling the place of a Lovedale, a Blantyre, or a Livingstonia, these great missionary institutions which have become characteristic of the work done by the Scottish Presbyterian Churches. It is our hope and aim that Kikuyu Mission will become to British East Africa what these institutions are to South Africa and to Nyasaland. It is on these lines—namely, evangelistic, educational, medical, and industrial—that the work has now been founded, and we trust that, under God's guidance and blessing, the work may greatly grow to the advancement of His Kingdom and the spiritual welfare of the Kikuyu people.

[MEMBERS OF STAFF.]

## MEMBERS OF THE STAFF IN 1910.

## KIKUYU.

*Head of the Mission*—Rev. HENRY E. SCOTT, M.A., L.R.C.P. & S.  
(Edin.)

*Medical Missionary*—JOHN W. ARTHUR, M.B., Ch.B., M.D.  
(Glasg.)

*Teacher*—JOHN GARRIOCK.

*Industrial Missionaries*—WILLIAM O. TAIT (Carpenter); A. Y.  
ALLAN (Agriculture).

*Ladies on Staff*—Mrs WATSON, Miss MARION STEVENSON, Miss  
CHRISTINA B. MOTHERWELL, Nurse.

*Other Lady*—Mrs SCOTT.

## KENIA.

*Lay Missionary*—A. RUFFELL BARLOW.

*Medical Missionary* — HORACE R. A. PHILP, M.B., Ch.B.  
(Edin.)

## NOTE.

Under the arrangement made when the Kikuyu Mission was transferred to the Church of Scotland, no contribution towards its support is made from the General Funds of the Foreign Mission Committee. For its maintenance, so far as not met by the Income from the Endowment Fund, it depends solely upon the direct liberality of its friends. The Treasurer is Mr W. M. M'LACHLAN, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee, 22 Queen Street, Edinburgh.

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